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LIFESTYLE COLUMNISTS

Resources available on preventing underage drinking



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Abilene Public Library

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Underage drinking is an important topic to discuss, but sometimes the message gets lost in translation. It's essential that teens learn about the dangers of alcohol because the older they get, the more likely they are to be exposed to the pressures of drinking.

If you need help explaining to your teens that it's OK to say no to a drink, your Abilene Public Library can help with some great resources.

Regardless of how parents might feel, there will come a time when teenagers get a driver's license and can hit the road with their friends and engage in even more social activities, including parties. With this new freedom comes new responsibility, and having a discussion with your teen on alcohol is important.

Empower your teens with knowledge, while providing yourself — as parent, guardian or concerned adult — with some valuable information.

"Safe Road Home: Stop Your Teen From Drinking & Driving," by Karen Goodman, may have been published in 2005, but it contains great information that's still relevant.

This book offers you a quick reference for looking up answers to the top questions concerning underage drinking. Inside, you'll find some staggering statistics, including the fact that on a typical weekend, one teenager dies in a car crash every hour in the U.S. — and almost half of those crashes involve alcohol.

You'll learn that nearly a third of the kids in a national survey reported getting into a car with a driver under the influence, not knowing how a driver's reactions can be impaired by alcohol. This resource will certainly open your eyes and offer you new information to relay to your teens.

Another great resource is "I've Got This Friend Who: Advice for Teens and Their Friends on Alcohol, Drugs, Eating Disorders, Risky Behavior, and More," edited by Anna Radev. This book provides information on a wide range of teen issues coming straight from teens themselves.

Working with experts at KidsPeace, an international organization helping kids and teens learn to avoid and overcome crises, this book offers real discussions on alcohol, tobacco use, drug abuse, eating disorders and other risky behaviors. It's an excellent tool.

If you're looking for a general guide, try "The Truth About Alcohol" by Mark J. Kittleson. This book is part of "The Truth About" series that tackles current issues faced by teens. The information is presented in a straightforward, and most importantly, a nonjudgmental manner, so that teens won't feel as if they're being talked down to.

Offering statistics, background, research studies and more, this book will tell all you need to know about binge drinking, college campuses, drunken driving, underage drinking, alcohol abuse and more.

These are but a few of the resources at your Abilene Public Library that can help you get the conversation started with your teens about the dangers of underage drinking.

Knowledge is always power, and with even more books available, we'll certainly have something in our collection that may be of interest to you.

Tremain Jackson is manager of the South Branch of the Abilene Public Library.

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